



10-18-1854

Letter from John W. H. Baker to Julia Ann Baker, 1854 Oct. 18

John W. H. Baker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/grcc>

Recommended Citation

Baker, John W. H., "Letter from John W. H. Baker to Julia Ann Baker, 1854 Oct. 18" (1854). *Gold Rush Life*. 89.
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/grcc/89>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Americana at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gold Rush Life by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

Mokelumne Hill, Oct. 12th, 1854

My Dear Wife

After having finished my dinner today (consisting of a broiled Mutton chop, Potatoes, Stewed Tomatoes & Sweet Potatoes), I attempt to give you one of those semi-monthly communications which you have been accustomed to receive from "Doc John" (as I was formerly denominated). I am enjoying very good health and in good condition as to mind, as any one should be when they are doing a good business. I am boarding in Restaurant Style at Charles P. Dudleys. have only been boarding thus for the past few days as my former boarding place has closed the business of taking boarders. I get boarded at the same price as before, \$10 per week.

I recieved yours of August 30th a few days since giving the usual good news of health in my little family, and that Fred & Maria were in daily attendance at school. I am pleased with the good success of Cousin Hannah in the line of teaching, and hope she may continue to have the same good success for some time to come.

You write that you wish me to give you particulars in regard to my business. I think I have written them and that ere this you have recieved a letter containing most of the particulars as to my property here. But I will state the circumstances in which I stand at this time. I have sent a draft for \$500 to you by the mail beofre this. I have by me at this time about \$200 in coin, and a single Piece of Gold for which I paid \$197.50 (and which I value at \$200) I have a gold ring for which I paid 15\$ and a gold pencil for which I paid 18\$. So much for gold. My share of the Medicines which we have on hand now cost me \$300 in San Francisco. these are in qith the same amount owned by Dr. Holbrook. I then own my dental instruments 50\$ and a nice case of Amputating Instruments containing in the same case two Trephines, the whole case cost me 50\$ in San Francisco. I own the

Letter 37

-2-

pocket case of instruments for which I paid 24\$, one Scarificator & cup worth 15\$, one Injecting Pump and a case of Disecting Instruments together worth 10\$. I own the books which I brought out with me, a list of what I saved of them I put in on a slip of paper, valued at \$60. One half company Library 20\$. I own one Anal Speculum for which I paid \$8, one bedstead, straw mattress & blankets for which I paid \$27. As to debts I will not reckon upon them but I think we have some \$600 or \$800 which are good and will be paid by and by--Making in all, aside from the \$500 sent home & the good Debts due about \$1000, I have ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ here at this time. I owe in San Francisco 200\$ for Medicines & I owe a man by the name of Patterson \$60, which debts I intend to pay soon. I may owe 8 or 10\$ beside but not more than that leaving me about \$725. I was offered for my instruments, Library and $\frac{1}{2}$ the Medicines, together with my privilege here, \$1000 only 2 days since. But I asked the Doctor who offered it \$2000, so we made no trade. I have expended considerable of an amount for clothing since the calamity by fire, about 60\$ I think. Our business is now worth from \$20 to \$50 per day. and with that I can soon do better than to sell out for \$1000. I have been thus minute in my statement for the reason that it may be well for you to know my condition here, that in case of any unforeseen event I may be taken away, you can understand my claim to property.

By the last mail I recieved a letter from Sophia asking information concerning Oliver's affairs and I have written her by this mail just what I think of his matters here and the claim which J. Storrs says he has for 800\$. And my advice to her is to keep what she has unless he has a legal claim to a part of it. Which I am willing to swear that he told me plainly he has not got. My opinion is that were she to pay what he says is due him she would never realize one dollar from the debts due to Oliver here--therefore I advise her to

Letter 37

-3-

keep that and give up the idea of obtaining more in this land of robbers.

I have written a letter to Mr. J. P. Chellis by this mail, thanking him for his kind regard to my family and his remembrance of me and them in my absence.

I am sorry to hear that Dr. Slick is flourishing so extensively in that place, but the old saying is that "Every dog has his day" and so it is with him. Tell Jane that she no need to worry herself as to me. She may have whom she pleases for a doctor while I am absent, but when I return I shall want them to stand aside. Tell A. Howard that I am glad to hear that he is still in pursuit of Knowledge. I am reminded very much of Howard in the person and manners of a young man who has just opened a school here. He has about the same amount of inquisitiveness that Abel had. He has just arrived from crossing the Plains. If he manages well he will thrive here. He has some 20 scholars at \$5 per month each--

Remember me to Miss Fanny Bass--and other enquiring friends-- I recieved the announcement of the birth of a son from Newell Colby Esq. He seems to be mighty well satisfied with his operation and thinks he has done something wonderfull--I am thinking he is much pleased with a new thing--As to the price of provisions in Meriden I am somewhat astonished that they should have had such a dry season when there has been two such short crops the two previous years. But I want you should have enough of every thing even if it is pretty high in price. Such things as cannot be obtained there you can send to Boston for--You can probably buy Potatoes in Boston and pay frieght on them cheaper than in Meriden and besides get a better article--

I want, when you recieve a draft which you are to deposite at the bank, that you should see that the business of depositing is done as soon as possible after you recieve the draft. For delays

Letter 37

-4-

are dangerous--And we cannot tell what may happen to the company, on which such draft may be drawn, in a few days. Therefore as a matter of safety you should always deposite the same as soon as possible.

I think I shall send a draft for \$100 by the Steamer of the 1st of Nov. that is if I can do so conveniently. the money on which I design for your use in the purchase of the things you may need for a living--

I have several letters to answer from my friends but my time of writing this mail has been so fully occupied that I shall not be able to write more than this at this time.

I desire very much to return to my dear wife and family and at times I feel almost like starting on my return, but upon reflection I conclude that for their benefit and my own I will endure the seperation for a time longer, and not return with so small a sum as I should be obliged to do at present. I want enough to purchase a good home and enough to furnish myself with the necessary articles for a practising Physician, and I do not think I have obtained quite enough for that purpose at present. In one year more I think I can clear \$2000 more than I now have & with such a prospect I am of the opinion I had better stay. Tell Fred that I want to see him & Sis very much that I hope they will be very good--I intend to keep the piece of gold I spoke of in my letter and bring it home and show it to you all--it is a very nice specimen--

With these few lines I have to bid you all good night-- with a desire of your enjoying all the blessings which an absent father and husband could wish his wife & children.

From your Affectionate Husband,

Mrs. Julia Ann Baker
Meriden, N. H.

John W. H. Baker

List of Books

Woods Practice, 2 vols	\$10.00
Piper's Illustrated Surgery	8.00
Jones Ophthalmic Medicine	5.00
Hoopers Physicians' Vade Mecum	4.00
Worcester on Cutaneous Diseases	5.00
United States Dispensatory	4.00
Dufton on the Ear	1.50
Green on Croup	1.00
Audny on the Heart	1.50
Goddard on the Teeth	10.00
⑦ Megrims Midwifery	10.00
Woods Botany	<u>2.00</u>
	\$62.00

I own $\frac{1}{2}$ of the company library beside,
my half of which is probably worth \$20.